

25X1

Copy 6

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

**SUBJECT: Procurement of C Triple Prime Camera
Systems for Project IDEALIST**

1. The question of whether OSA was wise in moving promptly to purchase four ITEK C Triple Prime cameras for the U-2 has come into question several times. It was raised initially when OSA placed the order for these cameras several days after the operational demonstration of one foot resolution over Cuba. It has come up recently in questioning whether we are willing to risk losing these cameras on China overflights in return for enhanced resolution.

2. At the time of the original purchase we made a careful evaluation of all available cameras to see if, in fact, the C Triple Prime camera was the way we wished to go. A table of the existing and proposed camera candidates is attached for interest. The Eastman-Kodak OXCART camera promised to give comparable resolution with wider swath width. However, this requires a very major modification for use in the U-2. There was also the question of lead time on the cameras themselves. The OXCART camera, of course, raises an even more important potential loss question.

3. The Air Force is also sponsoring the development of a MYCON 48" camera for OXCART and U-2 use, which promises to give one foot resolution on the ground. However, this camera has not yet been tested and could not be delivered until early 1964.

25X1

4. The C Triple Prime camera had already demonstrated 10" resolution and could be purchased for about [redacted] per copy. The first of the production models could be available within four months and would fit in the U-2 without equipment modification. Its disadvantage is clearly its narrow

NRO review(s) completed.



25X1

width width of 17 miles, which we had hoped we would obtain in the convergent stereo version. However, in order to increase swath width coverage, it would be necessary to modify the aircraft fuselage so as to tilt the two C Triple Prime cameras. Nonetheless, it is our experience that only the strips immediately beneath the flight path are of special value for high resolution coverage and this is exactly where the C Triple Prime delivers its 10" resolution. Therefore, the USA people proceeded promptly to place an order for four stereo cameras with my concurrence, using funds in the 1964 Program B budget which had been allocated by NSC to U-2 camera procurement. This prompt action was vindicated by the favorable intelligence community reaction to the product of the C Triple Prime cameras resulting from missions over Cuba and COMINT interest in utilizing this camera system over China.

5. Recently, we have been concerned about the effect of the loss of one of the C Triple Prime satellite cameras over China. The fact of the matter is that the camera has been flown three times over Cuba and could have been lost either by hostile action as in [redacted] case, or due to mechanical failure as in [redacted] case recently. Had we lost the cameras over Cuba they probably would have gone quickly to the Soviet Union where there is a capability for exploiting the technology they would have gained. Were we to lose the C Triple Prime camera over China, there is a real question in my mind whether it would be shared with the Soviets. Certainly I would question whether the Chinese possess the capability to exploit the C Triple Prime camera's advanced technology in view of their own lack of a major reconnaissance program. The substantive people have been quite clear in their need for high resolution photography of both Paoou and Lanchow. The C Triple Prime camera, with its 10" resolution and narrow strip is ideal for this purpose.

25X1

25X1

SECRET

25X1

I suggest that we need this coverage far more than we need to worry about the consequences of divulging the basic technology.

5. My strong recommendation is that we continue to acquire the operational capability with the four C Triple Prime cameras.

ALBERT D. WHEELON
Deputy Director
(Science and Technology)

cc: DDCI
EX. DIR.

Signature recommended:

AD/CI

Distribution:

Cy 1 & 2 - Addressee
3 - DDCI
4 - EX.DIR.
5 & 6 - DD/S&T
7 - AD/OSA
8 - D/TECH/OSA
9 - SSD/OSA
10 - RB/OSA

SECRET